

**Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended): A method for protecting a memory space from external access, comprising the steps of:

storing in a location in memory a plurality of lock bits, each associated with a separate logical portion of the memory space and determinative as to the access thereof for a predetermined type of memory access operation thereon;

detecting a request for access to a desired location in the memory space for operating thereon;

comparing the requested predetermined type of memory access operation with the associated lock bit in the associated logical portion and determining if access is allowed for the requested predetermined type of memory access operation; and

if allowed, performing the requested predetermined type of memory access operation on the desired location in the memory space.

2. (Currently Amended): The method of Claim 1, wherein the predetermined type of memory access operation is a read of an addressable location in the associated logical portion.

3. (Currently Amended): The method of Claim 1, wherein the predetermined type of memory access operation is a write of an addressable location in the associated logical portion.

4. (Currently Amended): The method of Claim 1, wherein the predetermined type of memory access operation is an erase of the associated logical portion for an addressable location therein.

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5. (Previously Presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of storing in a location the plurality of lock bits comprises storing in a variable location in the memory the plurality of lock bits and storing the lock bit location in a known location in the memory, such that in the step of comparing, the location of the lock bits is first read from the memory and then the lock bits read from the memory.

6. (Currently Amended): The method of Claim 5, wherein the predetermined type of memory access operation is an erase of the lock bits.

7. (Currently Amended): The method of Claim 6, wherein the predetermined type of memory access operation of erasing the lock bits requires that each of an associated lower logical portion of the memory having a relatively lower logical memory address and not containing lock bits be erased before a top most portion of memory having a relatively higher logical address than the lower logical portion is erased, which top most portion of the memory contains the lock bits.

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